

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT
FOR NEW AND BEGINNING TEACHERS**

STANDARDS OF LEARNING

SEGMENT #2: STANDARDS AND CLASSROOM CREATIVITY



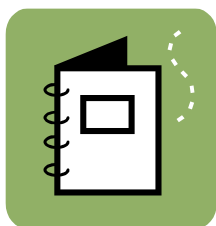
VIDEO SEGMENT TRANSCRIPT



PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS



ANNOTATED RESEARCH BIBLIOGRAPHY



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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT FOR NEW AND BEGINNING TEACHERS

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Funding and technical assistance by the
Virginia Department of Education

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Professional Development Toolkit for New and Beginning Teachers



The PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT FOR NEW AND BEGINNING TEACHERS is a research-based video streamed program with accompanying resource documents. The program is an outgrowth of a previous Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute (CEPI) online mentoring study at Virginia Commonwealth University. The findings of the online mentoring study revealed twelve topics new and beginning teachers felt additional university training would have led them to more effective use of best practices in the classroom. In this program, each of the twelve topics is presented in two to six stand alone video segments. The total number of segments is forty five. Suggested uses, in addition to personal viewing by K-12 teachers for self improvement, include professional development, mentor and mentee, university prospective teacher, and small or large group training.

The facilitators are university faculty and practitioners with field experience. Each is currently involved in teacher training or serves as a staff development administrator. All are currently engaged in educational research, teaching and/or educational policy development.

The teachers in the video programs are classroom teachers. Some of them were participants in the 2006 Online Mentoring Study in which the topics for this project were identified. They represent all disciplines in K-12 grades.

Resource documents for the programs are provided as PDF files to facilitate the use of the 45 video segments. The first set of documents is composed of: (1) a description of the project, (2) an introduction to program facilitators, including a definition of each topic, and a list of the video segments, and (3) a research formative study summary that helped to guide the project's development. The second set of documents is composed of: (1) a description of the project, (2) a full text transcript for each video segment, (3) a set of problems and solutions related to each video segment in the form of a work-study guide, and (4) an annotated bibliographic summary of references and Internet links for each transcript. Many of the organizations and agencies referenced in the transcripts are actively involved in the development of video and professional development presentations that support policy and advocacy.

Every reasonable effort is made to present current and accurate information. Internet content, however, does appear, disappear and change over time. CEPI, as a university-based educational policy research institute endorses no specific position of any listed group.

STANDARDS OF LEARNING

SEGMENT #2: STANDARDS AND CLASSROOM CREATIVITY

VIDEO SEGMENT TRANSCRIPT

Standards of Learning (SOL): Knowledge of skills and abilities required to master state and local school K-12 curriculum standards.

Facilitator: Dr. [Bill Boshier](#), Jr. Distinguished Professor
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AUDIO	VIDEO
<p>Standards-based education and creativity continue to stimulate an on-going debate in the education community. Much has been written about the topic in education studies and periodicals. Creativity advocates often feel that creativity is stymied by standards and they speak out in schools and through a variety of electronic media. Do you think standards are having a negative effect on classroom creativity?</p> <p>I am Bill Boshier, Executive Director of the Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute and Distinguished Professor of Public Policy and Education. Let's look briefly at what is being said by critics who believe that standards impede creativity in instructional programs.</p> <p>Comments by critics include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Standards and high stakes testing define the success of the school, the teacher and the child. Creativity has fallen alongside instruction in the arts.2. In the standards-based community of thought, creativity is considered non-productive and looked upon as too subjective.3. The talents of gifted students are depressed when standards are the driving force in the classroom.4. Creativity is not nurtured in the "grill and drill" measurement environment stimulated by standards.5. Students have no control over their own assessment.6. Schools are "educating people out of their creativity"- This is a quote by Sir Ken Robinson that is being cited extensively by critics of standards-based education and is being repeated in many Internet blogs and other interactive communication.	<p>DR. BOSHER</p>

I recently heard a parent who home schools her child say that standards are "just a way schools get money from the Federal Government". Standards guide instructional programs. Advocates do not believe that, when properly used, they educate students and teachers out of their creativity. Comments by advocates also appear in electronic and published media. In *Gifted Child Today*, a magazine that strongly supports creativity, for example, an article by Burke-Adams released by Goliath Business Knowledge in Demand provides the following quotes and support:

1. "Standards provide incentives for educators and provide objective data on which to base educational decisions." (Diamond and Spillane, 2004).
2. "The purpose of a standards-based curriculum is to provide a sequence of objectives that will create greater equality and equity in student performance." (Sandholtz, Ogawa & Schoner, 2004).
3. Achievement improves when state-wide objectives are stressed.
4. Teachers expect more of learners when state-wide/system-wide objectives are stressed.
5. Teacher quality may be measured by student test scores and results.
6. The measurement movement is objective. It provides a reliable indicator of learner progress in school, provides data to parents that is understandable, and serves as a guideline for what students ought to know and be able to do in a specific grade level and in a given subject.

Creative teachers continue to demonstrate that while standards provide performance and accountability data at the school level, they do not directly impact "how" they teach or what methods and materials they choose to use in classroom instruction. Survey findings show that, in general, parents value test results. There are also indications in research that the business community and employers of high school graduates support standards-based education.

Let's hear what a few teachers have to say about the effects of standards on creativity in their classrooms and their success and/or failure in addressing both standards and creativity..

My name is Amanda Weiss and I am a second year teacher. I am not teaching a core discipline class this year. I am torn on the issue of whether or not standards stifle classroom creativity. On the one hand I truly believe that standards are the bare minimum from which teachers are able to expand and teach their students. Last year, as a teacher of a core discipline subject, I took an entire week to watch *Hotel Rwanda* with my World History II students as we talked about genocide. This was more time than was needed but I felt like it really helped my students understand the severity of the content we were discussing. So in that instance I do not feel that the standards stifled my creativity. At some point, I think

AMANDA WEISS

every teacher at some point may find themselves in a situation where they want to incorporate more student-centered activities into the classroom. They may be unable to do so, however because of time constraints. I think this is a topic for on-going debate if teachers feel "how" they teach is being impacted by the implementation of standards.

I am Beth Jones. I am a first year ninth grade English teacher. So far, as a first year teacher I have been able to make lessons creative while still addressing the standards. Of course, not everything in an English classroom can be thrilling and extremely creative, but I can plan presentations, projects, and group work that appeal to my students' likes and still teach them valuable skills. For example, my students just finished reading *West Side Story*. While I did have to make sure students could outline the plot components and identify literary devices used throughout the story, the students could apply this knowledge to their creative project.

On the other hand, in 9th grade English, I must teach a lot of grammar, and at times, the standards that detail grammar instruction do not allow for much creativity. Because I must teach so much grammar this year, I do not have time to add a substantial amount of creativity into my grammar instruction. I do hope, as a more experienced teacher, I can better combine grammar instruction, and creativity with the standards I must teach.

Our daughter is a teacher. In a recent discussion, I asked her "Do standards influence the way you teach?" Her response was: "Dad, standards are the goals that are set for me, my students and my school, they have nothing to do with the way I teach." Standards and creativity are not mutually exclusive.

BETH JONES

DR. BOSHER

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Ask yourself: What resources do you use to align your instruction with learning targets? How do you know if your student's are successful? How do you communicate information about the standards with students, families, and colleagues?

Suggested use for this module:

1. Analyze:

Please select one of the scenarios below and problem-solve a list of possible solutions. Record your ideas in the space provided. Discuss these ideas with your other educators (mentor, colleagues, or other beginning teachers).

2. View:

Watch the corresponding video on this topic. How does this information change your ideas?

3. Compare:

Revisit the scenario selected. Next, review the section entitled, "Possible Solutions" comparing the ideas listed with your own list.

4. Reflect:

How will you apply this new information to your current or future classroom? What goal will you set to help you begin to change your practices? What support is needed to help you accomplish this goal?

5. Apply:

List the first step towards change in the space below. Create a timeline for success and place deadlines in your personal planner as a reminder. How will you know when you have met your goals?

Scenarios 1 & 2: Standards of Learning

Scenario 1

Ms. Canton is a new teacher to the State of Virginia. She recently moved here from another state. She has been noticing that students are struggling with the content area vocabulary she has been teaching. In her inclusive classroom, she is uncertain which vocabulary terms within her teaching unit are really necessary for the students to master. Also, she worries about how much she has covered at this point in year and is concerned about how much depth she should provide in her lessons. What resources should she visit to alleviate these concerns?

Scenario 2

Mrs. Wang is a beginning teacher who is seeking guidance on what essential content she should be teaching in her history classes. There is so much critical information to teach in World History and Geography and she is feeling lost about how to begin teaching her standards. She wonders what she should focus on when teaching the ancient river valley civilizations such as Egypt and China. What resources should she visit for support?

Circle the scenario that you selected below:

Scenario 1

Scenario 2

Record a list of your own possible solutions here:

Summary & Goal Setting

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Standards of Learning (SOL's)

The SOL's in Virginia designate the expectations for all students in each subject area (English, mathematics, history, science, technology, art, foreign language, health and physical education, and driver education). To access the standards for your subject area, visit the following website:

<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Superintendent/Sols/home.shtml> Use the pull down menu to select your grade and subject areas. New teachers may also want to view the expectations for the grades above and below your teaching level after becoming familiar with your own standards. This information will provide you with a context or scaffold for the specific content that you are teaching.

Curriculum Framework

The Curriculum Framework is available for the four core subject areas (English, History, Mathematics, and Science). This supplemental document provides guidance for new teachers on which information should be taught for each Standard of Learning. The document includes teacher notes on understanding the standard, essential understandings for students, and a bulleted list of the knowledge, skills, and processes needed to be successful with each standard. To access the Curriculum Framework, please visit the Virginia Department of Education website at:

<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/CurriculumFramework/>

Enhanced Scope and Sequence

The Enhanced Scope and Sequence includes example lesson plans and resources for instruction in the four core subject areas (English, History, Mathematics, and Science).

<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/EnhancedSandS/>

Enhanced Scope and Sequence PLUS

This website includes lesson plans with useful strategies for differentiating learning for all students in the classroom. The lesson plans at this site include connections for meeting the needs of all learners including the following areas:

- Technology connections
- Multi-sensory information
- Community connections
- Small group instruction
- Vocabulary strategies
- Organizing content for students

<http://www.ttaonline.org/staff/sol/sol.asp>

Once you are on the Training & Technical Assistance Center website, click your area of the state. Next, select the 'SOL Enhanced' tab at the top of the page. Use the drop-down menu on the side of the screen to access your content area or standard. Visiting this website will help you incorporate research-based teaching practices into your lesson plans. The site is especially helpful for working with students with disabilities and/or limited English proficiency (LEP).

Other Curricular Resources

New teachers may also want to visit the VDOE website <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/> to access testing blueprints (weighting of test items) as well as sample released SOL questions from testing administrations administered in previous years. Additionally, beginning teachers should meet with their mentors to find out what school division resources are available for instructional planning. School division resources vary by locality, but typically include items such as Pacing Guides, Curriculum Documents, Professional Resources (books, websites, and training materials), and Assessment Materials.

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- ❖ The results indicate that most teachers reported using the results to make instructional and assessment changes, especially those who emphasized depth of learning and higher-level cognition. Greater collaboration among teachers was reported, as well as more formative classroom assessment. Elementary teachers changed more than secondary teachers. Small to moderate effect sizes suggest important impacts on a moderate number of teachers that are more positive than previously reported for high-stakes minimum competency testing.

McMillan, James H. (2005). *The Impact of high-stakes test results on teachers; instructional and classroom assessment practices*. Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium, Virginia Commonwealth University.

- ❖ School leaders need to understand the very real demands of standards-based instruction. They must also understand their own role in ensuring that every classroom teacher is prepared to meet these demands

Jamentz, Kate. (2002). *Isolation is the enemy of improvement: instructional leadership to support standards-based practice*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 46944)

- ❖ To ensure that every student achieves high standards, teachers must, themselves, understand the standards - and that means having a clear vision of what achievement of each particular student would look like.

Jamentz, Kate. (2002). *Isolation is the enemy of improvement: instructional leadership to support standards-based practice*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 46944)

- ❖ High-stakes tests may encourage teachers to provide more depth in teaching subjects, to focus more on higher level cognition, to use more formative assessments, and to use more individualized and small group instruction, rather than to emphasize rote learning, direct teaching for English, science, and mathematics, and whole class instruction.

McMillan, James H. (2005). *The Impact of high-stakes test results on teachers; instructional and classroom assessment practices*. Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium, Virginia Commonwealth University.

- ❖ The means of achieving the standards may vary greatly within and across classrooms. In standards-based systems, teachers must develop a repertoire of differentiated strategies for meeting the variety of learning needs represented among various groups of students.

Jamentz, Kate. (2002). *Isolation is the enemy of improvement: instructional leadership to support standards-based practice*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 46944)

- ❖ Effective standards-based instructional practice requires that teachers
 - Work effectively as part of a team
 - Use data to guide instruction
 - Collect accurate data on student performance
 - Align instructions to standards
 - Communicate standards for student performance to parents and students, and help students assess their own progress in relation to these standards
 - Understand expectations for student performance

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